

# ELL Report

## 1. Description

- a. *The setting of the field experience (e.g., in a classroom, at a community organization location, etc.).*

Classroom

- b. *The student(s)—use a pseudonym to maintain confidentiality—with whom you are working (e.g. age, grade level, level of English Proficiency, personal characteristics based on observations/interactions, other information that may give the reader a more in-depth description of the student)*

Sam is a 12 year old male student with a good grasp of conversational English. While he is currently passing (with an A average in math, science, PE and Orchestra, he is struggling in Language Arts and Social Studies. This is, not an obvious pattern that teachers are used to seeing in students. However, this is something I have seen before and I was asked by his homeroom teacher for some ideas as she feels he might easily qualify for the gifted program if we can figure out where the disconnect is occurring. Sam's parents do not speak English and all correspondence occurs in Spanish which further complicates getting the gifted paperwork together.

- c. *The days and times that you met with the student.*

8:15 AM - 9:00 AM Friday, February 5<sup>th</sup>

10:30 AM - 12:00 PM Monday, February 8<sup>th</sup>

3:00 PM - 4:30 PM Monday, February 8<sup>th</sup>

1:55 PM - 2:55 PM Wednesday, February 10<sup>th</sup>

8:15 AM - 9:00 AM Wednesday, February 24<sup>th</sup>

- d. *Ways in which you interacted/engaged with the student (including pedagogical strategies).*

I have had a chance to sit with Sam and discuss how it feels to live in a place where everyone speaks a different language. I related my time spent in France and Brasil and the problems I experienced. We were able to agree that his conversational English is just fine. We eventually were able to agree that learning and reaching his academic potential was too important to sacrifice due to something as trivial as a difference in language. I assured him that his teachers all felt the same way.

When I first met Sam his teacher had asked me if I could meet with both the student and some of his teachers about strategies to help him bridge whatever gap was keeping him from performing to his potential in his language arts and social studies classes. Sam was attentive, neat and well-spoken. His conversational English was quite good. I would not have assumed this student even needed ELL services. I asked if it would be alright if I came from time to time and observe his classes. I explained that his teachers could use the excuse that I was there to observe them rather than him as it is not unusual for me to slip into a class and observe teachers.

On my next meeting I shadowed Sam in his language arts class. The students were discussing a story and after about fifteen minutes it became apparent that Sam was not following the conversation clearly. He made only one attempt to add to the conversation and ended up repeating, in slightly different words, what the teacher had stated at the top of the lesson. He appeared to have picked up the thread of the conversation without understanding the catalyst. I noticed that, even though the teacher and students did their best not to point out his inadvertent plagiarism, after the hushed reaction to his statement he did not offer any more ideas.

As his social studies teacher was using our new Google Cardboards that afternoon with our expedition software later that day and I was assisting, I was able to observe Sam in his social studies class that same day. He had no problem expressing himself during the class VR field trip to South America. However, the next day the teacher showed me his write up of the VR field trip. The language used was well below his grade level and failed to show the main ideas that the teacher was looking for.

I was able to meet with Sam and our gifted coordinator during his advisement period. I asked him about what I had witnessed on Friday and he admitted that he had not understood the initial statements by the teachers and only began to put things together after the students had contributed, restated and given context to the idea. I asked him if it would help if the teacher gave him translations of the main idea or essential question in Spanish at the start of class. He felt that that would help but thought it might somehow be cheating. I told him not to worry about cheating, we are more interested in his learning than the language used. Since all the teachers on his team either use eClass or Google Classroom for their daily content, I asked if he would mind borrowing a Nexus 7 from me to keep up with the current EQ and main idea for social studies and language arts. He was already familiar with Google Translate as a way of checking up on words he wasn't clear about. I then asked his teachers to be sure to post their daily EQ in either their Classroom, D2L or their homework calendar.

As of my last meeting with Sam he was doing better in language arts but was still having trouble with with his social studies teacher. Having identified some strategies that seem to work for him I feel there is, at the very least, a map for moving forward and that he and his parents can actively advocate for the use of these strategies. And, at the very least, he has tools that he can leverage to help himself when the need arises.

## 2. Objectives and Assessments

Write 2-3 learning objectives and state how you will assess each. Provide evidence for meeting the objectives.

Objective	Assessment	Was the objective met? Evidence of student learning.
8LA_B2009-3 : identify the difference between the concepts of theme in a literary work and author's purpose in an expository text (GPS)	Classroom observation will be conducted as well as an opportunity later to ask the same questions verbally.	I was able to ask questions and determine that the student was simply having trouble with nuanced uses of English. Rather than translate the EQ I simply looked for multiple ways to restate the directions along with some non-verbal representations. His LA teacher is fine with technique as she thinks all of her students will likely benefit from this. Sam was then able to express the difference when we compared the first Harry Potter book with an advertisement.
8LA_L2009-79 : provide details, reasons, and examples, arranging them effectively by anticipating and answering reader concerns and counter-arguments (GPS)	Classroom observation will be conducted along with written student assignments. I will also ask him to explain to me verbally what he wrote in an essay of his choice.	Sam was really thrown for a loop here. His writing assignments clearly showed he in no way had understood the objective for the assignment. Even when the objective was made clear verbally with the help of a Spanish connections teacher, Sam struggled to construct sound counter-arguments. I asked him to think of a subject where his thinking might be different from the majority opinion and be prepared to defend his position the next time we met. On our next meeting, he was prepared and did demonstrate some solid reasoning although his strategies were still not at grade level.
8SS_L2007-45 : analyze the role of the legislative branch in Georgia state government (GPS)	A formative assessment will be given through D2L. I will also conduct a classroom observation and an informal conversation..	This was a really tough one. Sam's social studies teacher has proven difficult to motivate to try new things for as long as he has been at our school. I ran out of time before I felt we met this one As soon as we are through with Milestones, I have asked Sam to try one more time and his teacher will open up the D2L assessment to him one last time before the end of the year.


### **3. Resources**

*You are required to use 2-3 ELL-specific resources to help inform your understanding of ELLs and increase your pedagogical strategies to assist students who are English Language Learners (ELLs). You may use the resources listed within the module or other resources available to you. Briefly describe how the resources were used to assist in your experience.*

First and foremost, as I am a frequent critic of my system's sometimes ill-thought programs and databases, I must give credit where credit is due. GCPS has a very robust ELL department with deep resources and several good databases. These allow me to track students, their plans, and success and failures. Because it is clear text searchable I could, for example, cross-reference the exact strands Sam was having trouble with with his demographic data to look for strategies and plans that had been successful in the past. There is a good reason that GCPS has such a high success rate with moving ELLs into the mainstream often before they reach middle school. Since Sam's teachers are already required to update records in the county's ELL database, I was able to show them how to search for other students with similar needs and backgrounds.

<http://www.colorincolorado.org/> is a site I recommend highly. It is bi-lingual, and aimed not just at teachers, but parents and students as well. Sam's language arts teacher was not aware of this site and she and I used several articles from its archives to work on methods to differentiate instruction for Sam. I can't say enough good things about this site.

<http://www.cal.org/> is another website with I have used. The Center for Applied Linguistics is aimed at teachers and academics. It is deep in theory and contains a wealth of freely available papers, research, studies and other resources to help any ELL teacher. I found several great articles to pass along to Sam's teachers here including a wonderful article on GO TO strategies which grew out of Project EXCELL which contained a matrix of scaffolding options broken down for speaking, reading, writing and listening and desired level.

<http://www.readingrockets.org/> is the final website that I used with Sam's teachers. I found a couple of good videos here to use to try and sell them on increasing classroom flexibility in their view of differentiation with a focus on not only creating centers but figuring out a better way of deciding where and which students would benefit most from given strategies. I really found the concept of learning communities within a classroom resonated.